

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column comprising

a female member adapted for slidingly receiving a male member therein and at least one metal strip fitted therebetween having an uneven contact surface, characterized in that said metal strip is fitted between the male member and the female member and inside at least one recess in a fastening cage clamped to the external surface of said male member.

Claim 2 (previously presented): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said cage is clamped to the outside of the male member by deformations on the lateral surface thereof.

Claim 3 (previously presented): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said cage is injected directly on the male member.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 3, further comprising a plurality of metal strips fitted inside respective recesses of said cage.

Claim 5 (**currently amended**): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column comprising:

a female member adapted for slidingly receiving a male member therein;

at least one metal strip having an uneven contact surface; and [[,]]

a fastening cage fitted between the male member and the female member, said fastening cage having at least one recess, [[and]] said fastening cage surrounding said male member[[; and]] , and said

at least one metal strip being received in said at least one recess.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 3, further comprising

a plurality of metal strips fitted inside respective recesses of said cage.

Claim 7 (**new**): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said male member has a substantially polygonal cross-sectional shape.

Claim 8 (**new**) A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said male member has a substantially triangular shape with flat vertexes.

Claim 9 (**new**) A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said male member has only flat surfaces.

Claim 10 (**new**): A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 5, wherein

said male member has a substantially polygonal cross-sectional shape.

Claim 11 (**new**) A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 5, wherein

said male member has a substantially triangular shape with flat vertexes.

Claim 12 (**new**) A low sliding load intermediate shaft in a motor vehicle steering column as claimed in claim 5, wherein

said male member has only flat surfaces.